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DISASTER REDUCTION AND RELIEF: DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATION

Strengthening the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator

Note by the Secretary-General

1. A number of intergovernmental decisions, including General Assembly resolution 45/211 and Economic and Social Council resolution 90/78, had requested proposals from the Secretary-General on a number of interrelated issues relating to the capacity of the United Nations in disaster and emergency responses. In that context, the Secretary-General has already presented two notes (E/1991/79 and E/1991/109) expressing his view that it would be more appropriate to present a report addressing all the relevant issues to the General Assembly at the forty-sixth session. This would enable the Secretary-General to take fully into account the discussions to be held during the Council's second regular session of 1991.

2. In this connection and with a view to facilitating the deliberations of the Council, the Secretary-General would like to make available a background paper on the office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (see annex).

Annex

OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR: BACKGROUND PAPER

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INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/221 of 21 December 1990 on the strengthening of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO).

2. In that resolution the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General "to make proposals to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1991 for the strengthening of the capacity of the Office to fulfil its mandate, which are to be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993". These proposals should be made, "taking into account, inter alia, the experience gained by UNDRO in the situation between Iraq and Kuwait" and "in the light of an overall analysis of the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to calls for disaster mitigation and emergency relief assistance and of the role played by the Office in this field, which should address, inter alia, the implementation of General Assembly decision 42/433 of 11 December 1987 and the strengthening of arrangements for the response to complex emergencies".

3. In addition, the Secretary-General was requested to consider the need "to adapt further, in the case of the Office of the United Nations, existing United Nations procedures concerning the procurement, transport and storage of emergency supplies, including the establishment of special warehouses as needed, in order to permit the Office to respond in a timely manner to the special and immediate requirements of countries exposed to sudden disasters".

4. Further, the General Assembly requested the Economic and Social Council to review the situation with regard to emergency relief grants given by UNDRO, at its second regular session of 1991, and authorized the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, pending that review, to continue to make available grants, not to exceed $50,000 per disaster, to disaster-stricken countries out of the existing reserve of $360,000 allocated for that purpose in the programme budget of the Office for the biennium 1990-1991.

I. MANDATE OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR

5. UNDRO is the only United Nations office whose mandate relates exclusively to disaster management. UNDRO's mandate and structure, as outlined in its founding resolution 2816 (XXVI) of 14 December 1971, are as relevant and valid today as they were 20 years ago.

6. In paragraph 3 of resolution 2816 (XXVI) the General Assembly endorsed "the Secretary-General's proposals for an adequate permanent office in the United Nations which shall be the focal point in the United Nations system for disaster relief matters". According to the resolution, this office should be headed by a Disaster Relief Coordinator, appointed by the Secretary-General and reporting directly to him. The resolution also states that the

Coordinator's post should be at the Under-Secretary-General level, and that his office should be located in Geneva and "be a distinct element within the United Nations Secretariat".

7. The functions of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator are outlined in paragraph 1 of the resolution. They can be broken down into two broad and closely interconnected areas: (1) disaster relief mobilization and coordination and (2) promotion of disaster mitigation (prevention and preparedness).

(1) With regard to disaster relief mobilization and coordination, the Coordinator is authorized:

(a) To establish and maintain the closest cooperation with all organizations concerned and to make all feasible advance arrangements with them for the purpose of ensuring the most effective assistance;

(b) To mobilize, direct and coordinate the relief activities of the various organizations of the United Nations system in response to a request for disaster assistance from a stricken State;

(c) To coordinate United Nations assistance with assistance given by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in particular by the International Red Cross;

(d) To receive, on behalf of the Secretary-General, contributions offered to him for disaster relief assistance to be carried out by the United Nations, its agencies and programmes for particular emergency situations;

(e) To assist the Government of the stricken country to assess its relief and other needs and to evaluate the priority of those needs, to disseminate that information to prospective donors and others concerned, and to serve as a clearing-house for assistance extended or planned by all sources of external aid.

(2) With regard to disaster mitigation, the Coordinator is:

(f) To promote the study, prevention, control and prediction of natural disasters, including the collection and dissemination of information concerning technological developments;

(g) To assist in providing advice to Governments on pre-disaster planning in association with relevant voluntary organizations, particularly with the League of Red Cross Societies, and to draw upon United Nations resources available for such purposes;

(h) To acquire and disseminate information relevant to planning and coordinating disaster relief, including the improvement and establishment of stockpiles in disaster-prone areas, and to prepare suggestions to ensure the most effective use of available resources;

(i) To phase out relief operations under his aegis as the stricken country moves into the stage of rehabilitation and reconstruction, but to continue to interest himself, within the framework of his responsibilities for relief, in the activities of the United Nations agencies concerned with rehabilitation and reconstruction.

8. In addition to resolution 2816 (XXVI), later resolutions of the General Assembly provided further detail on UNDRO's mandate, in particular in the areas of information management and communications (resolutions 3243 (XXIX), 33/22, 35/228, 36/225, 36/259, 38/202, 39/207, 43/204 and 45/211) endorsing Economic and Social Council resolution 90/63. This amplification responded to the realization that informacion management and communications are essential support functions for the tasks of relief coordination and mitigation and, moreover, are an important link between the two. It is furthermore based on the rapid technological progress in this sector. The area of information management includes not only the most rapid and precise assessment and distribution of related information on damage and needs, but also early warning mechanisms, registers of available expertise, country files and disaster history databases.

9. In this context it is obvious that UNDRO does not, at present, benefit adequately from the enormous changes that have taken place in information management, communications and office systems. In recognition of this situation, a comprehensive study has been undertaken by UNDRO on the "Enhancement of Information and Office Systems at UNDRO". This project has been approved by the Scientific and Technical Committee of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction as a demonstration project in the framework of the Decade. Concurrently a number of improvements have been made in limited sectors in this field. However, the bulk of the work still needs to be done. With the ground laid, and given sufficient resources and attention, UNDRO will be able to make great strides in this area which is so crucial for disaster management.

II. APPLICATION OF THE MANDATE

A. Disaster mitigation (prevention and preparedness)

10. In resolution 2816 (XXVI), UNDRO was committed not only to coordinating post-disaster relief but also to promote the full spectrum of pre-disaster mitigation activities. In this regard, UNDRO was mandated to be the focal point for disaster mitigation in the United Nations system.

11. The proclamation of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction has not only been taken as an opportunity for stepping up disaster mitigation activities that it has been undertaking since its creation, but it has also served as an occasion to reflect on the overall capacity of the United Nations in the field of disaster prevention and mitigation, including the mandate and role of UNDRO in this area.

12. In mitigation, UNDRO's primary tasks can be grouped into two broad categories: first to advocate and promote disaster mitigation and secondly to provide technical assistance at the country level.

13. UNDRO's current activities in the promotion of the aims and purposes of the International Decade are covered in the Secretary-General's report on the Decade and need not be repeated here.

14. In promoting mitigation at the country level, UNDRO should serve as focal point of the United Nations system, particularly vis-à-vis UNDP, in helping disaster-prone countries to develop an integrated disaster mitigation and preparedness programme or strategy. This will allow them in a systematic manner to acquire capacity to establish the precise nature of hazards and risks. The programme or strategy for disaster mitigation and preparedness can then, with UNDRO's assistance, become a basis for the mobilization of external assistance from other sources.

15. The cost of such activities is very modest in relation to the losses that occur in disasters and the systematic application of disaster mitigation measures can typically reduce loss of life by 50 per cent and property losses by 10 to 20 per cent. UNDRO's concern is to ensure that developing countries are fully aware of disaster risks and take advantage of the most effective techniques for disaster mitigation.

16. The number and magnitude of requests for disaster mitigation assistance addressed to UNDRO has considerably increased in the last few years, a trend which is encouraging and reflects the growing awareness of the developing world, in part as a result of UNDRO's efforts. It has long been recognized by UNDRO that in order to develop a national disaster management office to its full capacity a long-term commitment is required. Typically, two to three years are needed to promote the full spectrum of disaster mitigation activities. UNDRO currently maintains quality support for about 25 mitigation projects (serving a total of 77 countries). It should be emphasized however that the scope of current projects covers only part of the identified mitigation needs.

17. As a result of a continually increasing flow of requests, UNDRO wishes to develop both the number and the scope of its migitation activities. In doing so particular attention will continue to be paid to the numerous linkages between disaster mitigation and the overall development process. This has found its expression in the cooperation developed with UNDP, which has supported this concept. The ongoing joint UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Training Programme is designed, inter alia, to promote this kind of cooperation. The UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Manual provides explicit methodologies and procedures for incorporating disaster mitigation issues into the UNDP country programming and project formulation exercise. It is hoped that this cooperation can be developed further through allocation of funds from UNDP's central resources, e.g. the special programme reserve, so that project strategies in this area are systematically developed in disaster-prone countries. This seems particularly relevant to UNDP's role of creating

management capacities in developing countries and because of the negative impact of disasters on the development process.

18. Further efforts are also required to prepare manuals and centralize information related to disaster mitigation activities in UNDRO in accordance with its role as the focal point.

B. Disaster relief coordination

19. While UNDRO's role in mitigation was little disputed and generally appreciated, numerous discussions took place over the years on its mandate in disaster relief, as evidenced by several major reports. These discussions inevitably included the qu tion of the types of disaster in which UNDRO should become active.

20. The Secretary-General's report (A/42/657), endorsed by the General Assembly in its decision 42/433, distinguishes three types of emergencies:

(a) Those disaster situations "which fell clearly within the competence of one of the United Nations organizations or specialized agencies and for which that organization was primarily responsible";

(b) Natural disasters and other disaster situations in which "aspects" fell outside "the specific mandate of a particular ... agency, involved more than one organization and necessitated the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator playing a coordinating role for the United Nations system as a whole";

(c) "... in exceptional circumstances, there might be disasters and emergencies of such magnitude or complexity that special arrangements would be needed to coordinate, mobilize and deliver emergency relief".

Natural disasters and other emergency situations

21. The resolution establishing UNDRO refers to natural disasters and other disaster situations. In spite of the logic of that resolution (see para. 7 above), which was supported by later decisions, the suggestion has repeatedly been made that UNDRO activities should be limited to natural disasters or to sudden natural disasters. As a consequence the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator is de facto recognized as having an automatic mandate and is expected to take action immediately once a natural disaster has occurred; such automaticity was not accorded for other disaster situations and UNDRO was therefore expected to act only if requested to do so.

22. UNDRO has argued that the essential distinction is not between natural and man-made disasters but rather between sudden and slow-moving, long drawn-out disasters. The effects of sudden disasters, whether natural or man-made, are often comparable and the response requires similar techniques. Both are rather different in the case of slow-moving disasters.

23. UNDRO has stated that for the time being it will focus its activities on sudden disasters, both of natural and other causes, in accordance with the view that its present level of resources and specialization does not enable it to support relief coordination activities in several major long drawn-out emergencies. However, this is to be seen as a guideline rather than a rule. In a number of continuing emergencies UNDRO has played a useful role at the request of the Secretary-General (e.g. Lebanon, Mozambique).

Complex emergencies

24. While the guidelines inherent in the categorization under paragraph 20 above continue to have merit, the line between those disasters that come under (b) and (c) cannot be drawn easily. Complex emergencies can be either of a sudden nature (the exodus of the Kurds from Iraq) or of a slow-moving character (drought in the Sudan) and they have led to an increasing number of "special arrangements". The question arises whether it would not be preferable to utilize a permanent capacity to advise the Secretary-General, at least in the initial phase, on all emergencies.

25. At present, while UNDRO has played its coordination role (e.g. in the situation between Iraq and Kuwait) and has had a supportive role in some complex emergencies (e.g. Lebanon), it has had no role at all in others (e.g. Operation Lifeline Sudan). The lack of automaticity in the response of the United Nations system in these emergencies, because of the ad hoc nature of the coordination arrangements used, contributed to delays and confusion on the side of the donors.

26. There is an urgent need for a central focal point in the United Nations for all types of emergencies, especially in the context of preparation and dissemination of appeals and other disaster-related information. A major flaw in the present separation between sudden and slow-moving emergencies, especially in Africa, is the absence of a strong central coordination capacity to conduct joint needs assessment, and to issue consolidated appeals for all types of emergencies. The absence of a clear responsibility of the centre, until ad hoc arrangements for the more complex and slow-moving emergencies are put into place, results in certain United Nations organizations launching their own separate fund-raising operations and needs assessment missions. Inherent in the ad hoc nature of the response of the United Nations system is lack of automaticity which results in delays in the critical early stages of emergencies.

Requirements for effective relief coordination

27. Experience has shown - for example during the situation between Iraq and Kuwait or the recent earthquake in the Islamic Republic of Iran - that the existing capacities of the United Nations system can respond well even to a major emergency.

28. However, coordination of emergency humanitarian relief is a difficult task. While the capacities are there, the existing set-up of the United

Nations system does not per se favour coordination and the structural tendency is for each player in the field to go his own way.

29. A standing central coordination arrangement in the United Nations system to respond to all types of emergencies will ensure that a degree of automaticity is built into the involvement of the United Nations system. On the basis of special emergency procedures and pre-determined division of responsibilities, the United Nations system can become automatically involved the moment an emergency is declared. In the case of ad hoc arrangements each emergency has its own structure, its own procedures for appeals and needs assessment, and its response time is necessarily delayed until the nature of the ad hoc arrangement is determined and procedures and structures established. It also results in duplication of administrative, financial and information capacities, since each ad hoc operation develops its own capacities in these areas.

30. On the relief side all of UNDRO's efforts must therefore be directed fully at providing a framework for joint coordination efforts for sudden disasters. In this regard the following concepts are of primary importance:

(1) Leadership;

(2) Effective information management;

(3) Closest possible cooperation with the other humanitarian agencies of the United Nations system and, given the role of the UNDP resident representative as UNDRO representative at the country level, with that programme, as well as with non-governmental efforts.

31. With regard to the concept of leadership mentioned above, it is indispensable that UNDRO speak with authority at all levels. At the headquarters level this is required in normal day-to-day contacts with other agencies, as well as in the more structured inter-agency meetings that UNDRO has held with increasing frequency. At the country level it is important for UNDRO to be represented by highly qualified UNDP resident representatives as UNDRO representatives and by its delegates who are often dispatched to support the UNDP resident representatives.

32. Given the leadership and coordination role that UNDRO must provide in emergencies, often several at a time, new blood is required within the Office to provide experience and talents that are complementary to those that already exist.

33. In order to raise the effectiveness of existing staff positions, increasing attention is being given to the recruitment of highly qualified coordination officers. Furthermore the ambitious Disaster Management Training Programme, launched jointly by UNDP and UNDRO, aims at raising the stature in disaster management, both of the resident representatives and of UNDRO personnel. Concurrently, a comprehensive internal training programme has been launched in UNDRO. A further means of enhancing the capacity of UNDRO staff,

also related to the issue of training, is the need to make the best possible use of modern office support systems.

34. The emphasis of UNDRO's disaster information activities relates to situations in disaster relief reporting, including information on damage and needs, relief activities undertaken at the national and international levels, reporting of contributions in cash and kind and balancing those against the established needs, and financial reporting on contributions to and through UNDRO.

35. In this regard, UNDRO's coordination role could also include reporting on the disaster response of the entire United Nations system as a whole on a systematic and regular basis. Such consolidated reporting has, in the past, not been attempted as a regular activity. UNDRO could be best placed to undertake it provided it is given the necessary resources, in particular with regard to information management.

36. Coordination means continuous and close contact with all other actors in international relief and, in view of their important contribution, this refers predominantly to the non-governmental sector and the International Red Cross. The capacity of the Office in this regard should be systematically enhanced and it seems advisable to create a senior level professional post which will devote attention primarily to cooperation with non-governmental organizations. This should ensure that non-governmental organizations are consistently included in UNDRO activities and should continue to forge strong links with them in a sustained fashion.

37. What is primarily required immediately at the outset of an emergency (if possible even before) is for a high-level meeting of the humanitarian agencies involved, to agree on respective roles, on a coordination mechanism to be set up and on other measures as appropriate (joint appeal, joint plan of action, concerted relief programme).

Facilitation of response

38. It is a core function of UNDRO to undertake and encourage preparedness measures that will improve the response of the international disaster management community at large, covering a wide range of activities. Examples of recent initiatives in this regard are:

(a) The UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Training Project;

(b) The UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Manual;

(c) The Disaster Terminology Standardization Project;

(d) The initiatives on Search and Rescue (in particular the International SAR Workshop 1991) aiming at establishing certain procedures and guidelines;

(e) The International Conference on Disaster Communications 1990;

(f) Memoranda of Understanding with other humanitarian agencies, including the League of Red Cross Societies.

39. There are many other activities that can be undertaken in support of an improved response. These should be pursued systematically by UNDRO and implemented by relief staff, in particular at times of a relatively lower level of relief coordination activities which depend on the actual occurrence of disasters.

III. RESOURCES AND CONSTRAINTS

A. Financial

40. In order to exercise its mandate, UNDRO was never able to rely on adequate financial resources from the regular budget of the United Nations. As indicated in the Joint Inspection Unit report of 1980, UNDRO's total budget resources in the first 10 years of its existence were very small as viewed against the tasks to be accomplished, and against the means available to disaster-related programmes or units inside and outside the system. There was an important increase in staff in 1976, but since 1980 the zero growth rule applied in UNDRO's regular budget resources. This was compounded by the 15 per cent cut of regular budget staff resources effective end-1990. An overview of present allocations from the regular budget is provided in appendix I, and of extrabudgetary resources in appendix II. UNDRO's total regular budget allocation for the biennium 1992-1993 stands at $7.2 million.

41. This unsatisfactory situation was clearly recognized by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, which in numerous resolutions have called for a strengthening of UNDRO's resources. These calls broke the usual framework and led to the nearly unprecedented request addressed to the Secretary-General to submit proposals for the strengthening of UNDRO in the programme budget for the next biennium.

42. Given its small regular budget resources, UNDRO has to rely to a very large extent on extrabudgetary resources, both for its staffing needs and for other requirements in the execution of its mandate. Such resources were fairly small in the first 10 years of UNDRO's existence, totalling about $27 million for the eight years from 1972 to 1979. Over the 1980s, and in the absence of strengthening of its regular budget allocations, there was a significant increase in extrabudgetary resources mobilized by UNDRO, as indicated in appendix III. Since 1990 more than 90 per cent of UNDRO's total resources come from extrabudgetary funds and about 40 per cent of its total staffing costs originate from such resources. Contributions to the Trust Fund for the Strengthening of UNDRO, which cover additional staff costs, have increased significantly over the past five years. This is an expression of the growing support for UNDRO not only from several major donors, but also from developing countries. Support is also shown for UNDRO disaster mitigation projects as reflected in relevant trust funds, but unfortunately at

a level still below documented needs, as expressed by developing countries requesting assistance in this field. The bulk of extrabudgetary resources are, however, channelled through the Disaster Relief Trust Fund, which is used for support to stricken countries, during emergencies, through other humanitarian organizations. It should be noted that, although UNDRO does not address the general public for donations, it received in 1990, mostly through its New York Office, donations of over $300,000 from the general public.

43. Reliance on extrabudgetary resources offers some flexibility to UNDRO in its activities. Resources can be sought for specific purposes for which they are most immediately needed. There is in this connection an excellent relationship between aid agencies of donor Governments and UNDRO. (Some problems have been observed, however, as a result of grant conditions incompatible with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations - an Organization-wide problem.)

44. At the same time, however, considering the understandable reluctance of donors to finance administrative and staff costs from voluntary resources, the strengthening of UNDRO's core staff and services (in particular information management) that is required to manage relief funds and to support the much expanded relief activities did not take place. While the extrabudgetary funds helped to broaden relief and mitigation activities, contributions that could be used for organizational development (training, strengthening of support activities, office support equipment) and planning were clearly insufficient. It could even be urged that the increase in "operational" extrabudgetary resources place too heavy a burden on UNDRO if not matched by an increase in staff to manage such funds.

45. In addition there are significant drawbacks associated with the reliance on extrabudgetary funds. For example, as there is no certainty about the level of donors' funding for the strengthening of UNDRO, i.e. for 40 per cent of the staff posts, stable positions cannot be provided at the required level to candidates with the correct profile for some of UNDRO's activities. In addition, as funds will be provided for specific operations, which may require additional staff, well qualified staff cannot be assured for the difficult and often sensitive coordination work carried out by UNDRO, which usually requires a thorough knowledge of the United Nations system. Finally, it is also difficult to maintain an acceptable geographical distribution of posts, or provide the necessary percentage of posts to women, since the ad hoc nature of posts financed from voluntary sources significantly diminishes the possibility of consistent planning and career development.

B. Human

46. Thirty-one UNDRO staff posts are financed from the regular budget, in the 1990-1991 programme budget. An additional 20 established posts were funded through extrabudgetary contributions. In total, UNDRO authorized staff were composed of 25 Professionals and 26 General Service at the end of the biennium (see appendix IV). These figures have to be compared with UNDRO's strength of staff in 1980, i.e. 50 established posts.

47. Since UNDRO's creation, comments have been made time and again concerning the quality of UNDRO's management and staff. The criticism seems to have faded away these last few years. It should be pointed out that the structure of UNDRO's posts, which has not changed since 1977, is not likely to attract the "seasoned, experienced, disaster management professionals" that UNDRO should have, according to a recent outside study. The coordination and mobilization work in emergencies requires several senior staff who can devote most of their time to the task in hand. In addition to the Branch Chief there is at present only one senior level post (P-5) funded from the regular budget in the Relief Coordination Branch. In disaster mitigation, the branch chief's post is funded from extrabudgetary resources.

48. Apart from the desirable provision of senior positions for emergency relief managers in UNDRO, important efforts are under way to ensure a high quality of its staff. For the first time in UNDRO's existence, comprehensive plans for training have been developed both through the joint UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Training Project and through a related internal UNDRO training programme.

49. Two main branches, the Relief Coordination Branch and the Disaster Mitigation Branch, are of approximately equal importance and carry out the bulk of UNDRO activities in these fields. A separate unit is responsible for administrative and financial matters in UNDRO. Other important activities, such as external relations, information activities (including the media at large) and information systems (including a data bank, a registry and a reference library), have been placed under the UNDRO Director. This contributes to overburdening executive direction and management, but it was the best approach that could be devised at a time when the retrenchment exercise imposed cuts in staff that were in fact affecting the structure. The time has now come to complete the restructuring work started in 1988 by creating a Disaster Information Management Branch, which would group together all the small units mentioned above, and which would have the additional task of overseeing UNDRO's internal training efforts.

50. The management of UNDRO of has always stated in very clear terms its policy objectives concerning the strength of staff of the office. Even if all requests for strengthening through additional human resources can be met, its staff will still be relatively small. In cases of emergency it must be able to swiftly mobilize external expertise (within and outside the system) and manage a sometimes quite large operation which must be dismantled as soon as the need for it disappears.

C. Specific matters

Emergency grant

51. About 10 per cent of UNDRO's regular budget resources (i.e. $360,000 per year) represent an "emergency grant" fund, from which small sums of $20,000 to $30,000 will be transferred to a given country, just stricken by a disaster,

as seed money for most urgently needed emergency expenditures (see appendix V). It could be argued that such emergency funds should not come from regular budget funds, but from extrabudgetary resources. However, the present regular budget allocations provide a secure, if small, basis for such support and UNDRO will undertake efforts to secure extrabudgetary funds which will aim at doubling the regular budget allocation. There does not appear to be need at this stage to increase the regular budget allocation for such emergency grants which should be increased by extrabudgetary contributions.

52. There might be merit in examining the feasibility of extrabudgeting a revolving central contingency fund for emergencies in order to ensure a rapid, coordinated and automatic response from the United Nations system the moment an emergency is declared. At present an effective response is limited at the early critical stages of the emergency by the length of time it takes the United Nations to prepare appeals, and for the donors to pledge and actually disburse their contributions.

Procurement procedures

53. UNDRO is addressing systematically and with care the issues of the adaptation of United Nations procedures concerning the procurement of emergency supplies as requested in paragraph 3 of resolution 45/221. This is a matter of major concern to UNDRO. Discussions have started with the Administrative Services. In the short time available for the drafting of this report and given the fact that UNDRO had to devote a very major part of its human resources to humanitarian issues of the Iraq/Kuwait crisis, it has also not been possible to explore fully the issues of the adaptation of United Nations procedures concerning the procurement, transport and storage of emergency supplies as requested in paragraph 3 of resolution 45/221. This is an issue of major concern that needs to be addressed systematically and with great care. Initial discussions have started with the Administrative Services of the United Nations Office at Geneva which, in the past, has exerted considerable efforts to assist in the question of procurement within the framework of existing rules and procedures. It is clear, however, that in many instances these rules and procedures are not sufficiently geared to emergency requirements. The problem is incidentally by no means restricted to UNDRO but concerns procurement for emergencies throughout the United Nations system. The adoption of common emergency procedures would contribute significantly to a rapid and coordinated response.

54. In the case of the situation between Iraq and Kuwait a full delegation of financial authority to UNDRO from the Assistant-Secretary-General for General Services, on an exceptional basis, has greatly facilitated the task at hand. It is felt though that the matter needs to be addressed on a broader basis and the Secretary-General will revert to it in his next biennial report on UNDRO.

Transport and storage of relief supplies

55. Experience shows that, in a disaster or emergency situation, there is a critical need to have basic relief supplies ready at hand for immediate

dispatch to affected areas. The UNDRO warehouse in Pisa, Italy, which was inaugurated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 21 April 1987, facilitates a fast response to requests for aid from stricken countries. It also enables the Office to fulfil its coordinating role in its operational aspects.

56. The warehouse, which has a volume of 6,000 cubic metres and is located on an Italian Air Force Base, is managed by UNDRO with the cooperation of the New York-based Field Operations Division, which is responsible for the contiguous United Nations Supply Depot (UNSD) for peace-keeping operations. The Italian Government financed its construction and the maintenance of a comprehensive emergency stockpile consisting of items such as tents, blankets, plastic sheeting, collapsible water containers, generators, cooking utensils and basic tools. The Governments of Japan, Norway and Finland donated emergency supplies of the same kind and assure their replenishment after dispatch to disaster-stricken developing countries.

57. From 1988 to 1990, a total of 2,300 tons of relief supplies were dispatched from Pisa to 33 countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe.

58. The UNDRO warehouse in Pisa is particularly well placed for relief operations to Africa, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The facility has therefore been used intensively during the Middle East/Persian Gulf crisis in order to provide urgently-needed relief aid to displaced persons and refugees. In that context, the warehouse has been playing an additional function, the need for which is likely to manifest itself and expand in the future: that of a cargo assembly point for relief shipments originating from various United Nations agencies, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other non-governmental organizations. During the crisis in the Gulf region, the provision of a Boeing 707 freight aircraft by the Government of Argentina for a period of two months enabled UNDRO to operate over 25 relief flights to the Gulf area on behalf of concerned agencies within the United Nations system and others. Smooth coordination was ensured by UNDRO staff both in Geneva and in Pisa, where the aircraft was based.

59. As a result of the expanding role of the warehouse, the need for additional space has emerged. While negotiations have started with the Italian Government on the possible establishment of a larger warehouse in Rome, arrangements are under way for the hiring of additional storage space at Pisa airport.

IV. EXPERIENCE OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR IN THE SITUATION BETWEEN IRAQ AND KUWAIT

60. In resolution 45/221 the General Assembly indicated that proposals for the strengthening of UNDRO should be made "taking into account, inter alia, the experience gained by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator in the situation between Iraq and Kuwait". As this report is being written, it is still too early to assess fully all phases of the

humanitarian assistance to people uprooted from Iraq and Kuwait. The first phase involved primarily migrant workers and took place between August 1990 and the end of that year. The second phase started in January, before the resumption of the war. The third phase started with the massive outflow of refugees from Iraq as a result of the civil unrest following the war.

Phase one

61. With regard to the first phase, UNDRO has made a comprehensive review of its role in an effort to learn lessons for the future. Related to this is a case report entitled "The Iraq/Kuwait crisis - international assistance to displaced people through Jordan, August-November 1990" (UNDRO/91/1).

62. These evaluations have led to many important conclusions which go beyond the framework of the present report. The following paragraphs will therefore reflect those conclusions which relate to UNDRO's mandate - relief coordination.

Coordination arrangements

63. United Nations involvemen was delayed due to lack of clarity with regard to responsibilities (lack of automaticity) as well as the absence of a request for assistance. Immediately after the receipt of the appeal of the Jordanian Government on 23 August (which was triggered by contacts undertaken by UNDRO), heads or high officials of UNHCR, UNDRO, LRCS, ICRC and IOM met at Geneva and defined respective responsibilities. UNDRO was requested to assume the coordination role for the United Nations, an arrangement confirmed by the Secretary-General on 27 August.

64. A flexible system of coordination was put into place by UNDRO, which functioned well from the end of August. UNDRO established a close working relationship with the government authorities, with the resident coordinator (under whose overall authority the UNDRO delegates were operating), with donor Governments, with local and foreign non-governmental organizations and, of course, organizations of the United Nations system. The most difficult task, in such circumstances, is to establish trust and confidence between all concerned. UNDRO, in close cooperation with the resident coordinator, acted as a facilitator between the Government and some of its partners such as non-governmental organizations or IOM. The operation mounted by UNDRO can best be described as operational coordination and support to the Government.

65. Most coordination decisions were taken or recommended at the country level based on existing capacities and on an evaluation of "who-does-what" best. One important decision taken in Geneva was UNDRO's request to IOM to undertake the lead role in the repatriation of people.

66. As concerns the UNDRO team itself, it was concluded with hindsight that in the critical first days when the world's attention was focused on the plight of the displaced persons UNDRO's presence in Amman should have been strengthened. This was done at a later stage and staff seconded from other agencies was added. It appears clear, however, that in future emergencies

UNDRO should be able to dispatch a self-contained team with the necessary secretarial support and equipment, including, if necessary, an information officer.

67. The importance of respecting the normal coordination structure of the United Nations system in the country in which the emergency arises was reconfirmed. Emergencies are times of disorganization, and adding a separate United Nations structure is normally neither necessary nor desirable. The close working relationship between the United Nations resident coordinator in Amman and the UNDRO team working under his authority was an important factor in the success of the operation ensuring that there were no overlaps in the needs identified by the United Nations agencies (to an extent the potential for such overlaps is inherent given the mandates, e.g. of agencies such as the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund).

68. At Geneva headquarters level, the meeting mentioned in paragraph 53 above appointed a joint working group membership in which was extended rapidly to other concerned United Nations organizations and met regularly at UNDRO for coordination of action and formulation of concerted appeals. This arrangement proved extremely useful and effective and should be repeated and strengthened in future emergencies. Particular attention should be paid to agreeing on procedures for appeals and terms of reference of participating organizations.

69. At the policy and information level, weekly meetings were held at the Palais des Nations between representatives of donor and affected countries, the United Nations, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. In all major emergencies such meetings should be held as early as possible and at regular intervals. In addition to responding to a need for information the participating agencies were given the opportunity to listen to wishes and advice from member States and the meetings served as an important element in fund-raising efforts.

Fund-raising and disbursement

70. The international appeal, which was issued on 27 August 1990, reflected for the first time the consolidated views of the Government of Jordan, the United Nations and IOM. It served as a basis for subsequent appeals that were issued as the situation evolved.

71. Separate appeals were issued by other relief agencies such as ICRC and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Care was taken, however, in coordination meetings to avoid any duplication of activities.

72. The Jordanian emergency vividly illustrated the need for quick availability of cash resources. In sudden emergencies where speed is of the essence in trying to save human lives the unavailability of cash is a very severe constraint. This problem is clearly identified in General Assembly resolution 45/221 and assistance requested of donors for its resolution.

73. Part of the effective response of UNDRO to the emergency is to be attributed to the very quick reaction of the Government of Japan to the Secretary-General's appeal launched by UNDRO. Not only was a substantial pledge of $US 22 million immediately made, but cash was almost immediately transferred to UNDRO and IOM. The coordination function of UNDRO was greatly facilitated by its ability to allocate cash to the United Nations and other agencies for the most urgently-needed expenditures.

74. As a corollary, it is also necessary to review administrative procedures for disbursement of available money (including procurement of goods and services) as mentioned elsewhere in this report. This is a long-standing problem in which the United Nations does not hold any exclusivity. Some of the donors took several weeks to translate their pledges into available funds. It should be noted in this connection that UNDRO greatly benefitted from the granting of a delegation of authority by the Assistant Secretary-General for General Services for purchases of relief goods and services.

Phase two

75. Phase two is clearly distinguished by the fact that it was possible to undertake advance planning as reflected in the Regional Humanitarian Plan of Action and in particular its first update of 11 January 1991. The Plan provided a precise framework for fund raising, an advance clarification of the roles of United Nations agencies and IOM, a joint plan of action and a new institution which came to be known as SUNEM (Senior United Nations Emergency Manager). The Plan gave equal prominence to the four transit countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey.

76. With regard to the role of agencies an important new decision was taken, namely to allocate responsibilities "horizontally" rather than "vertically". This means, for example, that UNHCR's responsibility was not focussing on refugees alone, but the Office was given responsibility for camp management in general (even if the camp population would not be refugees in the limited sense of the word). Similarly, responsibility for health, water, nutrition and sanitation was allocated to WHO and UNICEF; transport of people again to IOM; food and transport of food to WFP; and transport of other relief supplies to WFP and UNHCR. Thus responsibilities were based on an effective division of labour rather than only on target groups or the specialized areas each agency is mandated to address.

77. Another innovation was the institution of the SUNEM, reporting to the UNDRO Coordinator. While a final evaluation of his role in the four countries still needs to be made, the experience has been generally very positive. He operated under the overall authority of the resident coordinator. The terms of reference are attached in appendix VI.

78. Initial fund raising for phase two was very successful. The amount that had been appealed for, namely the start-up costs of $US 38 million, was quickly pledged although it was not available for several weeks.

79. UNDRO managed a complex distribution system of pledges and funds received that took into account all direct contributions to participating agencies. The guidelines for the allocation of funds are of interest and are reflected in appendix VII. A revolving emergency fund would provide a general solution to the question of start-up funds that would be immediately available at the beginning of each emergency.

80. Participating agencies have agreed to undertake a full evaluation of the experience of phase two of the crisis. Their involvement in phase three has prevented them from doing that in time for the present report. It is hoped, however, that it can still be undertaken in view of the various innovative features of the Regional Humanitarian Plan of Action.

81. At the end of the first two phases of the crisis the existing capacities of the United Nations system, together with those of other agencies such as IOM, the International Red Cross and the non-governmental organizations, were basically sufficient to address this crisis.

82. Coordination on the whole worked well. UNDRO was able to provide a useful framework for this coordination. An automatic responsibility would have greatly reduced the loss of time at the beginning of the operation by removing uncertainties as to who should be responsible for the emergency.

83. The conclusions and recommendations of document UNDRO/91/1 (see para. 61 above) are contained in appendix VIII.

Appendix I

REGULAR BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991

(United States dollars)

Object grouping	Net allotment
Posts controlled by staffing table	5 696 800
Supplementary personal services	236 600
Consultants	17 000
Ad hoc expert groups	35 300
Travel of staff	391 500
Communications	4 700
Hospitality	2 400
General operating expenses	150 500
Furniture and equipment	61 000
Grants and contributions	720 000
TOTAL	7 315 800

Appendix II

EXTRABUDGETARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991

(United States dollars)

Object grouping	Trust fund "Strengthening of UNDRO"	UNDRO programme support cost
General temporary assistance	149 000	115 200
Temporary posts	1 819 400	637 700
Consultants	88 000	170 000
Overtime	3 000	6 000
Common staff costs	537 900	188 200
Career development and training	100 000	-
Travel of staff	42 000	70 000
External printing and bindery	2 000	-
Hospitality	2 000	1 500
Miscellaneous services	8 000	370 700*
Data-processing equipment	47 000	173 700
TOTAL	2 798 300	1 733 000

* Including object grouping for telecommunications for $US 332,100.

Appendix III

EXTRABUDGETARY RESOURCES MOBILIZED BY THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR THROUGH ITS MAIN TRUST FUNDS, 1 JANUARY 1989-31 MARCH 1991

(Thousands of United States dollars)

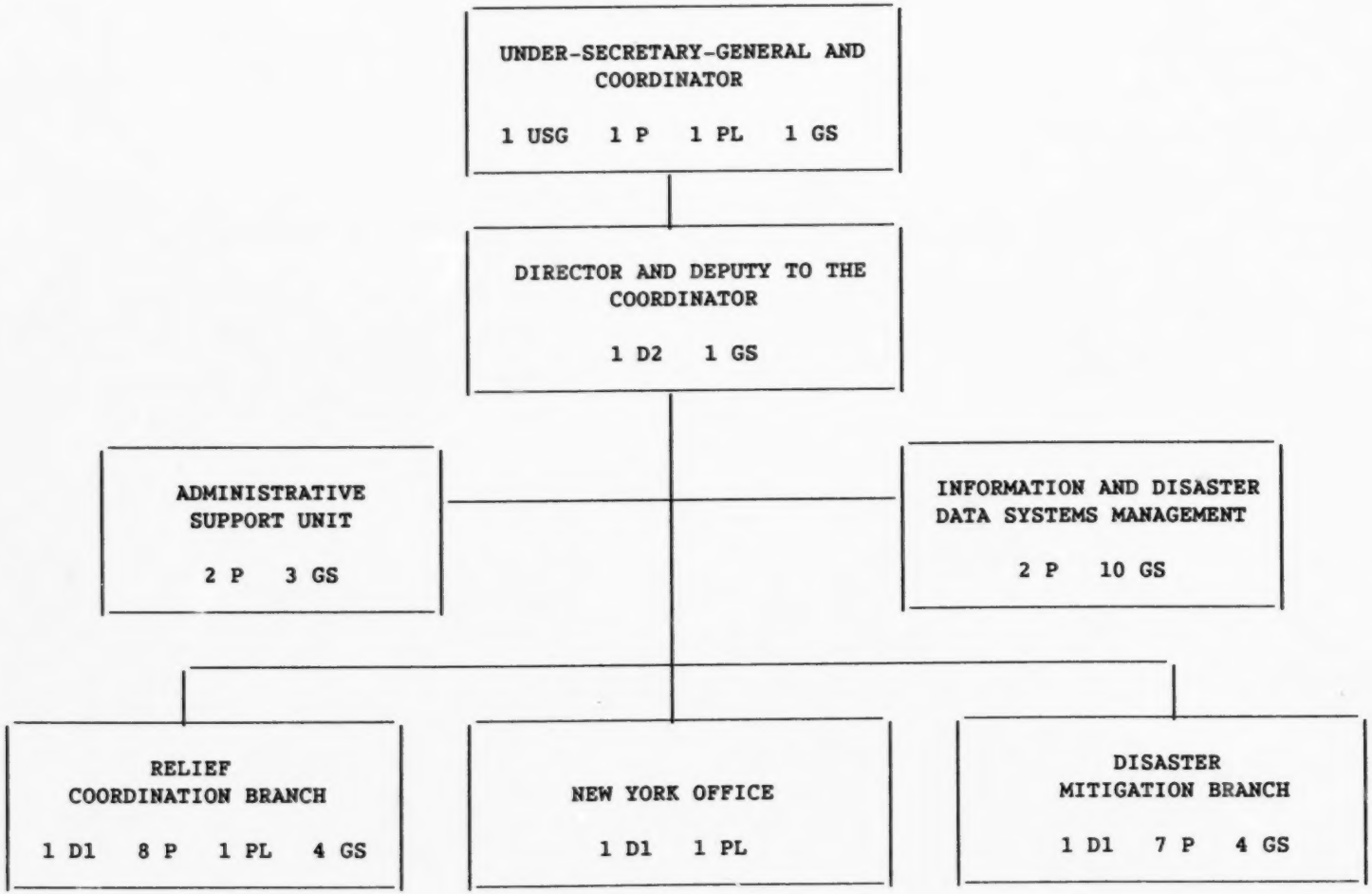
Trust fund	1980-1981	1982-1983	1984-1985	1986-1987	1988-1989	1990*-1991
Strengthening of UNDRO	1 162.8	1 005.5	1 729.0	2 316.5	2 348.5	1 902.9
Earmarked and Unearmarked Disaster Relief	1 478.9	15 296.8	16 275.8	15 461.7	42 500.9	102 670.2
Technical cooperation activities	204.7	1 831.1	1 617.7	9 987.9	3 835.1	2 817.6
UNDRO Programme Support Cost	-	-	-	-	1 691.9	2 880.0
International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction	-	-	-	-	212.4	1 357.6
TOTAL	2 846.4	18 133.4	19 622.5	27 766.1	50 588.8	111 628.3

* Up to 31 March 1991.

Appendix IV

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR

(1990-1991)


UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL AND COORDINATOR
1 USG 1 P 1 PL 1 GS
DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY TO THE COORDINATOR
1 D2 1 GS
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT UNIT
2 P 3 GS
INFORMATION AND DISASTER DATA SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT
2 P 10 GS
RELIEF COORDINATION BRANCH
1 D1 8 P 1 PL 4 GS
NEW YORK OFFICE
1 D1 1 PL
DISASTER MITIGATION BRANCH
1 D1 7 P 4 GS

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Appendix V

UNDRO REGULAR BUDGET EMERGENCY GRANTS,
1 JANUARY 1980-15 APRIL 1991

(United States dollars)

Biennium	Country	Emergency	Amount
1980-1981	Aden (UNDEV PRO)	Floods	30 000
	Afghanistan	Floods	10 000
	Angola	War/displaced/drought	30 000
	Chad	War/drought	30 000
	China	Drought/floods	30 000
	Fiji	Cyclone ("Wally")	10 000
	Gambia	Aid (post coup d'état)	30 000
	Guinea-Conakry	Floods	20 600
	Haiti	Drought/food short.	30 000
	Haiti	Hurricane "Allen"	20 000
	Indonesia	Typhoons/floods	16 200
	Iran	Earthquake	30 000
	Iran	Earthquake	30 000
	Iran	Floods	30 000
	Italy	Earthquake	30 000
	Jamaica	Hurricane "Allen"	20 000
	Mauritius	Cyclones	20 000
	Mozambique	Floods	15 000
	Mozambique	Drought/food short.	15 000
	Nepal	Earthquake	20 000
	Niue	Hurricane "Opa"	10 000
	Papua	Food shortage	10 000
	Somalia	Drought/floods	10 000
	St. Lucia	Hurricane "Allen"	20 000
	Viet Nam	Drought	20 000
	Viet Nam	Typhoon "Joe"	30 000
	Yemen	Floods	30 000
Total			596 800
1982-1983	Argentina	Floods	21 401
	Benin	Floods	20 000
	Benin	Nigeria expelled aliens	30 000
	Bolivia	Drought	25 000
	Bolivia	Floods	20 000
	Chad	Nigeria expelled aliens	20 000
	Colombia	Earthquake	27 800
	Comoros	Cyclone	10 000
	Comoros	Drought	4 000

Biennium	Country	Emergency	Amount
	Cuba	Hurricane	30 000
	Ecuador	Floods	20 000
	Ecuador	Floods	10 000
	El Salvador	Floods	30 000
	Fiji	Cyclone	10 000
	Ghana	Nigeria expelled aliens	30 000
	Guatemala	Floods	30 000
	Honduras	Floods	30 000
	Indonesia	Volcano	30 000
	Lebanon	Civil strife	30 000
	Madagascar	Cyclone	25 000
	Madagascar	Cyclone	5 000
	Mauritania	Drought	25 000
	Mauritius	Drought	4 000
	Mozambique	Drought	25 000
	Mozambique	Drought	30 000
	Nepal	Floods	25 000
	Nicaragua	Oil tank fire	22 799
	Nicaragua	Tropical storm	30 000
	Niger	Fire	20 000
	Niger	Nigeria expelled aliens	20 000
	Paraguay	Floods	20 000
	Peru	Drought	20 000
	Peru	Floods	20 000
	Portugal	Floods	25 000
	Sudan	Floods	10 000
	Togo	Nigeria expelled aliens	10 000
	Tonga	Cyclone	30 000
	Tunisia	Rains/floods	30 000
	Turkey	Earthquake	25 000
	Viet Nam	Typhoon "Nancy"	30 000
	Viet Nam	Typhoons	20 000
	Yemen (AR)	Earthquake	30 000
	Yemen (PDR)	Floods	30 000
Total			960 000
1984-1985	Afghanistan	Earthquake	20 000
	Algeria	Displaced persons	15 000
	Bangladesh	Cyclone	30 000
	Benin	Benin floods	10 000
	Benin	Drought	10 000
	Benin	Expelled peo. from Nigeria	20 000
	Botswana	Drought	25 000
	Botswana	Drought	23 600
	Burkina Faso	Floods	20 000

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Biennium	Country	Emergency	Amount
	Burma	Fire	15 000
	Cape Verde	Floods	20 000
	Chad	Drought	30 000
	Colombia	Floods	30 000
	Colombia	Volcanic eruption	30 000
	Comoros	Tropical storm	15 000
	Cuba	Hurricane "Kate"	30 000
	Ecuador/Galapagos	Fire	20 000
	Ethiopia	Drought	50 000
	Fiji	Cyclone	20 000
	Guatemala	Earthquake	30 000
	Guinea	Earthquake	30 000
	Jamaica	Hurricane	30 000
	Madagascar	Cyclone	30 000
	Mali	Cholera	30 000
	Mali	Drought	30 000
	Mauritania	Drought	30 000
	Mexico	Earthquake	50 000
	Mozambique	Power line	20 000
	Niger	Drought	30 000
	Philippines	Floods	50 000
	Somalia	Drought	25 000
	Sudan	Drought	50 000
	Swaziland	Floods	20 000
	Vanuatu	Cyclone	10 000
	Viet Nam	Cyclone	15 000
	Viet Nam	Typhoon/floods	30 000
Total			943 600
1986-1987	Bangladesh	Floods	25 000
	Bolivia	Floods	30 000
	Chad	Displaced persons	30 000
	China	Forest fire	30 000
	Ecuador	Earthquake	25 000
	El Salvador	Earthquake	30 000
	Fiji	Cyclone "Rajah"	20 000
	Guatemala	Floods	10 000
	Haiti	Fire and floods	30 000
	Lebanon	Armed conflict	50 000
	Lesotho	Snowstorm	10 000
	Maldives	Floods	10 000
	Peru	Floods	25 000
	Vanuatu	Cyclone	10 000
	Viet Nam	Typhoon "Maury"	20 000
	Yemen	Civil strife	2 000
Total			357 000

Biennium	Country	Emergency	Amount
1988-1989	Antigua	Hurricane "Hugo"	10 000
	Armenia	Earthquake	20 000
	Bangladesh	Floods	25 000
	Benin	Floods	20 000
	Burma	Fires	20 000
	Burma	Fires	25 000
	China	Earthquake	15 000
	China	Earthquake	25 000
	China	Floods	15 000
	China	Floods/landslides	25 000
	Cuba	Floods	15 000
	Djibouti	Floods	30 000
	Dominica	Hurricane "Hugo"	10 000
	Guyana	Power shortage	15 000
	Haiti	Hurricane "Gilbert"	25 000
	Jamaica	Hurricane "Gilbert"	25 000
	Mauritania	Displaced persons	25 000
	Mauritius	Cyclone "Firinga"	10 000
	Montserrat	Hurricane "Hugo"	10 000
	Myanmar (ex Burma)	Fires	25 000
	Nepal	Earthquake	20 000
	Nicaragua	Hurricane "Joan"	25 000
	Panama	Hurricane "Joan"	15 000
	Philippines	Hurricane "Ruby"	25 000
	Rwanda	Floods	25 000
	Senegal	Returnees	25 000
	Sri Lanka	Floods	30 000
	St. Kitts and Nevis	Hurricane "Hugo"	10 000
	Sudan	Floods	20 000
	United Republic of Tanzania	Floods	20 000
	Thailand	Floods	25 000
	Thailand	Typhoon "Gay"	25 000
	Viet Nam	Typhoons	15 000
	Virgin Is. (UK)	Hurricane "Hugo"	10 000
	Yemen	Floods	20 000
	Zambia	Heavy rains	20 000
Total			720 000
1990-1991*	Afghanistan	Earthquake	30 000
	China	Floods	20 000
	China	Typhoon	20 000
	Guinea	Evacuees/Monrovia	15 000
	Honduras	Floods	15 000

Biennium	Country	Emergency	Amount
	Iran	Earthquake	30 000
	Iran	Floods	30 000
	Jordan	Returnees	30 000
	Madagascar	Cyclone "Alibera"	15 000
	Malawi	Landslides	25 000
	Myanmar	Fires	20 000
	Niue	Cyclone "Ota"	8 000
	Pakistan	Earthquake	30 000
	Paraguay	Floods	15 000
	Peru	Drought	30 000
	Philippines	Earthquake	30 000
	Philippines	Floods	4 000
	Philippines	Typhoon "Mike"	16 000
	Sierra Leone	Returnees (Liberia)	15 000
	Somalia	Displaced persons	20 000
	United Republic of Tanzania	Floods	20 000
	Tonga	Cyclone "Ota"	8 000
	Tunisia	Floods	30 000
	Tuvalu	Cyclone "Ota"	8 000
	Western Samoa	Cyclone "Ota"	15 000
Total*			499 000
Grand total			4 076 400

* Through 15 April 1991.

Appendix VI

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SENIOR UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCY MANAGERS ASSIGNED TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICES IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, JORDAN, THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC AND TURKEY FOR THE IRAQ/KUWAIT CRISIS

To ensure the best possible implementation of the Regional Humanitarian Plan of Action relating to the crisis between Iraq and Kuwait, it has been decided that four senior United Nations staff members are assigned to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey.

They will act as the focal point for United Nations efforts, serving under the overall authority of the United Nations Resident Coordinators and reporting to the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator. Their function will be to oversee all United Nations-IOM emergency operations relating to the crisis.

The Emergency Managers will assist particularly in the following areas:

1. To ensure the liaison with the national Interministerial Emergency Commissions and support Government relief actions.

2. To facilitate coordination among the members of the local United Nations-IOM Emergency Management Team.

3. To maintain contact with main donors and, as necessary, to prepare meetings with the Emergency Operations Group and the main donors on the emergency phase.

4. To maintain contact and coordinate with the non-governmental organizations, including the Red Cross/Crescent movement, participating in the emergency operations.

5. To collect information on the emergency operations and disseminate them to organizations concerned.

6. To advise the designated officials on security matters related to the performance of the humanitarian tasks.

7. Where required, the senior officers will discharge other duties entrusted by the Coordinator within the emergency relief operations.

Appendix VII

SITUATION BETWEEN IRAQ AND KUWAIT

Principles for the allocation of contributions received through UNDRO

1. Initially, and up to a total amount of $US 38 million, funds received or firmly pledged will be allocated in accordance with the cost plan for the start-up costs for the updated Humanitarian Plan of Action. That means, for example, if $US 1 million is received it would, in principle, be allocated in proportion to the cost plan. Agencies will be informed immediately of such allocations.

2. Funds actually received will be transferred to the agencies as quickly as possible.

3. Any funds directly received by one of the agencies will be fully taken into account in the allocation. This means that agencies are obliged to inform UNDRO immediately of pledges made directly to them and of funds received directly by them.

4. It will only be possible to allocate those contributions made through UNDRO that are completely unearmarked. Funds earmarked to a specific organization will be taken into account in the allocation.

5. Contributions, or part of contributions, that come with specific wishes made by the donor Government regarding their use will have to be allocated in accordance with those wishes and an effort will be made to reconcile these with the details of the cost plan.

6. In principle, the total amount of funds received will be allocated in accordance with the cost plan. Departures from the cost plan, in particular to meet priority or unexpected needs, will be made in full consultation with the Interagency Group.

Appendix VIII

CONCLUSIONS OF THE UNDRO CASE REPORT: THE IRAQ/KUWAIT CRISIS - INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO DISPLACED PEOPLE THROUGH JORDAN

139. The relief and repatriation of 750,000 displaced persons through Jordan was a unique operation. It was a remarkable achievement first and foremost for the Government of Jordan. Credit should also be given to the United Nations for very effective and successful support to the Government's efforts. The role of NGOs and intergovernmental agencies is also to be highlighted.

140. The success of the operation is to be judged by the fact that there were no deaths attributed to camp conditions, no outbreaks of diseases or epidemics, and no disruption of the social fabric in Jordan. Unfortunately, however, about 80 per cent lost their lives when the buses transporting them to the airport had accidents.

141. During their visits to the camps, United Nations staff met with large numbers of displaced persons. Despite the circumstances, there were few complaints (even in Shalan I). Indeed, praise for the relief services and an understandable desire for early repatriation were the overwhelming sentiments of the camp populations. Those with experience of refugee camps elsewhere in the world considered the conditions and management of the camps in Jordan (with the exception of Shalan I) to be of the highest order.

142. Some of the lessons learnt from the international response to the crisis have been outlined in the preceding sections of this report, especially the last section: "Main problems and difficulties encountered". Some of these lessons are contingent upon the specific nature of the events. Others, however, could be taken into account in future emergencies. They include:

Coordination

143. The early confirmation of the coordinating body by the Secretary-General of the United Nations facilitated the immediate setting up of appropriate coordination mechanisms.

144. United Nations agencies should renew efforts to issue consolidated appeals and avoid separate appeals.

145. The establishment at Headquarters, from the outset and on an informal basis, of a United Nations contact group enlarged to include key relief agencies such as the Red Cross would facilitate coordination. Procedures for the issuance of United Nations appeals and terms of reference of participants should be agreed upon in advance.

146. United Nations agencies should intensify joint operational activities for the provision of staff, expertise and relief supplies.

Information

147. Information meetings with donors and relief agencies should be held immediately, even if data on hand are incomplete, in order to alert them to the situation.

148. The regular issuance of simple statistics on the caseload would be of great value for needs assessment and coordination.

Contributions by donors

149. Donors should provide UNDRO with timely and exhaustive information on contributions, so that it could be used as a tool for management and planning in the course of the emergency; conversely, UNDRO should disseminate this information in its contributions reports as clearly and concisely as possible.

150. Donors' administrative procedures should be modified to accelerate significantly, the payment of cash pledges and the delivery of contributions in kind.

151. In making contributions, donors should provide coordinating bodies with flexibility enabling them to respond to priority needs as they emerge; strict earmarkings should be avoided.

152. The possibility of establishing a cash reserve in UNDRO which could be immediately activated in case of an emergency needs to be carefully considered.

153. In line with past recommendations, donations of inappropriate food and medicines, or those either out-of-date or with limited shelf-life should be avoided.

Preparedness

154. The proposal for a data bank on donor expertise in relief management, as discussed at the Third Meeting of Officials in Charge of National Emergency Relief Services (NERS III, Geneva, 19-20 October 1989) could be further pursued, in the context of UNDRO information management systems, including UNIENET.

155. The United Nations should examine the possibility of setting up a stockpile of emergency dry rations.

156. In Jordan and in similar emergency situations, sanitation in the camps was a matter of concern. Relief agencies should consider expanding the services they can offer in this field.

157. As concerns UNDRO, it is important to draw on the experience gained in the Jordan emergency, which was basically a successful operation for the Office, in order to be able to approach future emergencies in an appropriate manner. The composition and size of the UNDRO team, the secretarial and

equipment support needed for the team for such operations, the requirements for information dissemination, including to the media, are important elements in this respect. It was fortunate that UNDRO could use a large part of its staff for the Jordan operation but this would have been impossible if other important emergencies around the world had surfaced at the same time. The Jordan emergency clearly indicates that there is a need to review the strength of the staff of UNDRO.